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In the war with Japan, there were many cases of Catholic priests doing intelligence work in north Shensi, south Shansi, and northwest Honan. Recently, there have been exposed spy incidents, such as those in the liberation war in Hsing-t'ai, Ch'i-ch'i-ha-erh, Nan Hsien, and Mukden. Because of these incidents, intelligent persons in religious circles have been disturbed, and the present vigorous reform movement has sprung up. The religious policies of the Chinese Communist Party and of the Chinese People's government are consistent and clear. Article 5 of the Common Program of the CPPCC provides that the people have freedom of religious belief and, by the same token, freedom to refuse religion. These two aspects of freedom receive the same protection of the law. Religious freedom should be absolutely divorced from foreign aggression and counterrevolutionary activity. Harmful actions will be restrained by the people's government. In restraining these harmful actions, the People's government will not interfere in religious liberty; nor will it allow such harmful actions while protecting religious liberty.

In regard to the question of pure religious faith, any idea of coercive action is both useless and harmful; so we intend to protect freedom of religious faith, just as we protect freedom of refusing religious faith. However, if the churches are used as tools of imperialism for aggression on China and of counterrevolutionaries to oppose the People's governments, they are acting contrary to the people's welfare, and contrary to the original purpose of all genuine believers. Those special agents who use religion to cloak subversive activities (not ordinary innocent church members), whatever religion they profess, whether they are Chinese or foreigners, should all receive proper punishment according to Article 7 of the Common Program.

Starting from this viewpoint, we welcome the self-government, self-support, self-propagation movement begun by Chinese Christians. This is a patriotic movement which Christians should follow to enable the Chinese church to get away from imperialist influence and travel along religion's proper path. The success of the appeal of break away from imperialism and institute a renovation of its own strength, so that the church can change from being an agency of foreigners and become Chinese, will give the Chinese church new life, and will alter the Chinese people's view of the Christian church. Thus a clear demarcation will be drawn between its own activities and those of imperialism making aggression upon China. Therefore, we believe that the manifesto of more than 1,500 Christians, will not only be supported by patriotic Protestants, but also be echoed by patriotic Catholics. All religious believers can get proper direction from this action. Let them advance in that direction, for only in this way can the religious world build up its normal religious affairs.

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